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DEPARTMENT FOR A/S FRAZER, S/E NATSIOS, AND AF/SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU

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SUBJECT: NCP EAGER TO NEGOTIATE WITH SPLM, OPEN TO
DISCUSSIONS ON ABYEI

REF: A. KHARTOUM 1794

[1](#)B. KHARTOUM 1780

[1](#)C. KHARTOUM 1761

KHARTOUM 00001847 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: NCP negotiator Dirdeiry Mohammad Ahmed told polchief November 25 that the NCP is eager to resume discussions with the SPLM. He claimed SPLM sources told him that First Vice President Kiir would be open to an invitation to meet with President Bashir by the end of the week, when the two would discuss the terms under which the six-member committee would resume their discussions. The NCP position is that the six-member committee should leave the question of Abyei to the two Vice Presidents, but commit themselves to moving forward on all other CPA implementation issues. Dirdeiry said the NCP is open to the Abyei Boundary Commission presenting its report so that the parties may discuss options for resolving their differences. The NCP preference is for arbitration to resolve their differences. He said Abyei should not block progress on other areas of the CPA. End summary.

NCP EAGER TO RESUME TALKS

[1](#)2. (C) NCP insider Dirdeiry Mohammed Ahmed told polchief November 25 that the NCP is eager to find a way for the SPLM to resume negotiations with the NCP and rejoin the Government of National Unity by the end of the year. He claimed President Bashir had invited First Vice President Kiir to attend a ceremony in his home town of Shendi on November 23 but that Kiir had declined. Dirdeiry said Luka Biong Deng would travel to Khartoum November 25 to request a Presidential meeting (Bashir, Taha, and Kiir) to discuss the terms under which the NCP-SPLM six-member committee would resume its discussions. (Note: According to press reports, Luka did arrive in Khartoum November 25 to initiate discussions with the NCP. End note.) Dirdeiry said the NCP position is that the six-member committee should leave the question of Abyei to the two Vice Presidents, but move forward on implementation plans for all other aspects of their November 2 agreement - the census, redeployment of forces, demarcation of the border, and ministerial appointments, among others. In the meantime a temporary administration for Abyei should be put in place and both SPLA

and SAF forces should be redeployed immediately.

NCP THINKING ON ABYEI

¶3. (C) Dirdeiry said the NCP's preferred option to resolve the Abyei dispute is arbitration. He claimed the NCP will never accept the Abyei Boundary Commission (ABC) report but is open to having the ABC experts present their report so that the two parties may respond to it. Dirdeiry who was the NCP representative to the ABC, said the experts exceeded their mandate and went way beyond what was stipulated in the Abyei Protocol, which called on them to define the nine Ngok Dinka kingdoms in 1905. Dirdeiry showed polchief numerous scanned maps and written references to Abyei from 1905 (taken from references in libraries in England, almost eighty documents in total) several of which describe the northern Ngok border as the Bahr al Arab.

¶4. (C) Dirdeiry said the NCP is irritated by First Vice President Kiir's statements in the media following his visit to Washington that the U.S. Administration will insist on implementation of the ABC report. They are very suspicious of possible American-SPLM collusion to "internationalize" the issue through IGAD or some other fora. (Comment: Some of these media reports seem exaggerated, but it would be useful to know what Kiir was told regarding the U.S. position on the ABC report. End Comment.) Kiir said the NCP would be willing to allow the experts to present their report, but that both sides should be allowed to respond with their own documents and then decide on a mechanism to resolve the dispute. He said the experts have no credibility because they exceeded their mandate, were paid consultants to the SPLM on other matters (in the case of Johnson, he claimed), and had recently made public statements regarding the ABC report that rendered them impartial. Dirdeiry suggested that an "ultimate" arbiter from another region would be preferable if the two sides are not able to negotiate a settlement between

KHARTOUM 00001847 002 OF 002

themselves. Alternatively, if the goal is to respect the terms of the CPA, the ABC panel could be reconstituted and could issue a final report that has been agreed to by the parties.

CONCERNS ABOUT JIU

¶5. (C) Dirdeiry said the NCP is very concerned about recent events on the ground in Abyei. He claimed that there has been an increase in the number of SPLA troops near Heglig, an area which should be demilitarized. He also accused the SPLA of illegally demanding that the Misseriya nomads turn their weapons over to the SPLA before crossing the Bahr al Arab with their cattle. Dirdeiry said the NCP has received a letter from SRSG Qazi requesting an emergency session of the Ceasefire Political Commission (CPC) for November 27 due to the failure of the Ceasefire Joint Military Commission (CJMC) to reach agreement on redeployment. He said the NCP is demanding that the SRSG clearly define why the CJMC meeting failed, which Dirdeiry claimed was due to the SPLA's inability to provide a detailed plan for redeployment from South Kordofan (the SPLA is in no hurry to redeploy from South Kordofan while SAF units are still in the South).

COMMENT

¶6. (C) The NCP will benefit from the continuing delays in resolving the Abyei issue, both financially (it is not yet paying the SPLM, Misseriya, or Dinka their share of oil revenues for Abyei while the dispute remains unresolved) and politically (Abyei delayed progress on other aspects of the CPA). However the NCP is keen for the SPLM to rejoin the GNU so it can regain some of the credibility it lost when its Southern CPA partner withdrew its ministers. This provides

the SPLM some leverage but not enough to gain what it wants on Abyei. The SPLM will likely have to settle for an arbitration mechanism or a reconstituted ABC panel, which would have the benefit of following more closely the terms of the CPA. While Dirdeiry's analysis sounds plausible, the problem remains the deep lack of trust the SPLM (rightly) has on the NCP's intentions and the SPLM's inability to date to map out an effective endgame strategy that would allow both sides to claim victory in this standoff. End comment.
FERNANDEZ